



2020 Elections:

Schedule Locations Pandemic

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Town Clerk

07-20-2020



2020 Elections Schedule

September 1st

- Primary Election
(U.S. Senate, Kennedy vs. Markey)
- Registration Deadline:
August 22, 2020
- Early Voting:
August 22 -28, 2020
(Bangs Community Center)

November 3rd

- General Election
(U.S. President, Biden vs. Trump)
- Registration Deadline:
October 24, 2020
- Early Voting:
October 17- 30, 2020
(Location to be determined)



Current Polling Locations

- Precinct 1: North Zion Church
- Precinct 2: North Fire Station
- Precinct 3: Immanuel Lutheran Church
- Precinct 4: Bangs Comm. Center
- Precinct 5: Bangs Comm. Center
- Precinct 6: Fort River School
- Precinct 7: Crocker Farm School
- Precinct 8: Munson Memorial Library
- Precinct 9: Wildwood School
- Precinct 10: Bangs Comm. Center



Current Polling Locations Pandemic Impact

The ten precincts are operated at seven different locations consisting of two churches, two elementary schools, a fire station, a library, and the Bangs Community Center.

Limited alternative buildings available for use in Town.

One of the ten sites is unavailable:

- Fire station: locked-down facility

Four of the ten sites present concerns/questions:

- Schools: worry about bringing the public into elementary school buildings
- Immanuel Lutheran Church and North Zion Churches: closed for services, possibly available for voting
- Bangs Community Center: currently closed to the public



Current Polling Locations Pandemic Impact

- Town Clerk identified concerns
- Town Manager assembled a team led by the Town Clerk that includes: Fire Chief, Facilities Maintenance Manager, and Superintendent of Public Works
- Cooperation and support from School Superintendent and School Facilities Manager
- Team developed alternatives and recommendations



Recommendation: Locate all 10 precincts at Amherst-Pelham Regional High School

Proposal:

- Creates one controlled environment for in-person voting on Election Day.
- Ten precincts vote at one location.
- Ample space to accommodate all ten precincts.
- Sufficient spacing for social distancing.
- Ability to create a single entrance/exit traffic pattern.
- No travel inside the school building.
- Plenty of parking for staff and voters.



Recommendation: Locate all 10 precincts at Amherst-Pelham Regional High School

Advantages:

- Creates one controlled environment for in-person voting on Election Day.
- Eliminates confusion as to where to vote.
- Provides greater and consistent oversight by Elections Officials.
- Creates staffing efficiencies.
- Cost savings (eliminate building rental fees, reduce number of constables and police officers).
- Limits exposure to possible COVID-19.
- Centralizes contact tracing protocols.
- Resolves on-going concerns about several polling locations including accessibility, disruption, parking (Wildwood School, Crocker Farm School, Fort River School and North Zion Church).
- 2020 election dates align School schedule of no classes.
- Proximity to Town Hall.



Recommendation: Locate all 10 precincts at Amherst-Pelham Regional High School

Concerns:

- Question if relocation of polling sites might inhibit turnout, inadvertent voter suppression.
- Change of location may confuse long-time voters.
- Access to new polling location by public transportation.
- Polling locations removed from neighborhoods.
- Adding distance to travel for people to vote.



2020 Elections Town Clerk's Pledge

*“To ensure that voters are able to exercise their
right to vote safely and efficiently.”*

- Encourage and facilitate vote-by-mail.
- Prioritize safety and security.
- Extensive effort to educate the public of the new polling location.
- Special outreach to students and those who aren't regular voters.
- Increase voter turnout!



Recommendation: Next Steps

I. New legislation “Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020”

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2020/Chapter115>

- ❖ Town Council may change polling locations if it is “determined that the public convenience or public health would be better served”
- ❖ Town Council shall evaluate and report on “whether such change would have a disparate adverse impact on the basis of race, national origin, disability, income, or age”
- ❖ Report shall be posted on the Town’s website and in Town Clerk’s office
- ❖ Change must be posted at least three days prior to vote of Town Council
- ❖ If voted by the Town Council, change must be published on the Town’s website and notify voters by electronic means (in addition, the Town Clerk recommends physical mailing)

II. MGL Chapter 54, Section 24: Designation of Polling Places

<https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titleviii/chapter54/section24>

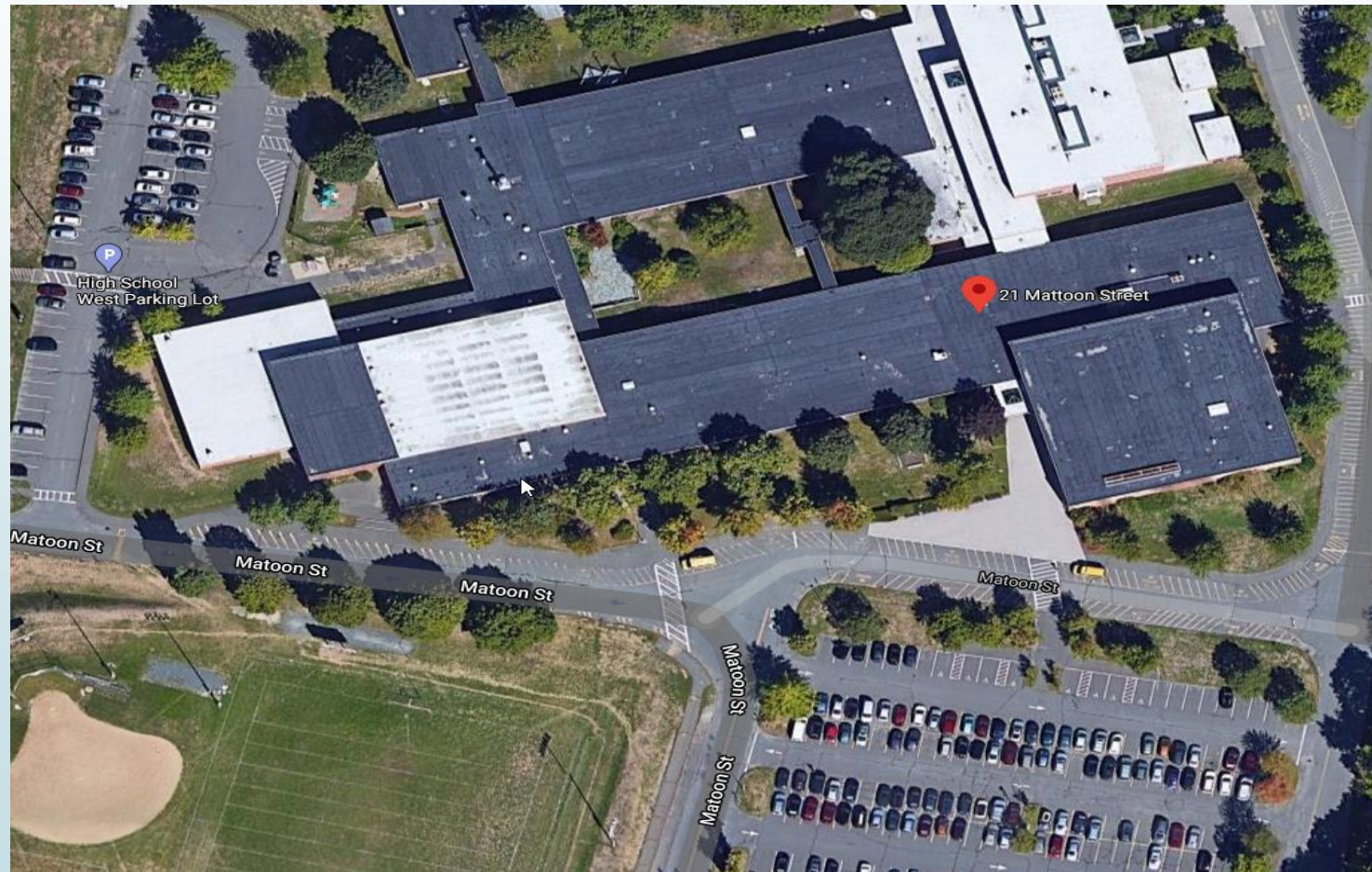
- ❖ Town Council must vote “twenty days at least before the biennial state...election” (August 11, 2020)



Recommendation: Next Steps

- ❖ July 28, 2020: Town Council prepares and reviews report documenting “disparate adverse impact on the basis of race, national origin, disability, income, or age” which shall be posted on the Town’s website and in the Town Clerk’s office
- ❖ July 30, 2020: Post proposed change (at least three days prior to the vote of the Town Council)
- ❖ August 3, 2020: Town Council votes to approve proposed change. (Town Council must vote “twenty days at least before the biennial state...election”, i.e. by August 11, 2020)

Amherst Regional High School





Single entrance and exit.



Side walk for social distancing single-file line



Inside gym1 – Staging Area



Entrance into polling area.



Gym 2 – Space for all ten precincts.



Exit from polling location.



Exit back into Gym 1.



Exit from Gym 1 to Weight Room



Exit via weight room to sidewalk.



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Questions and Comments
Next Steps?